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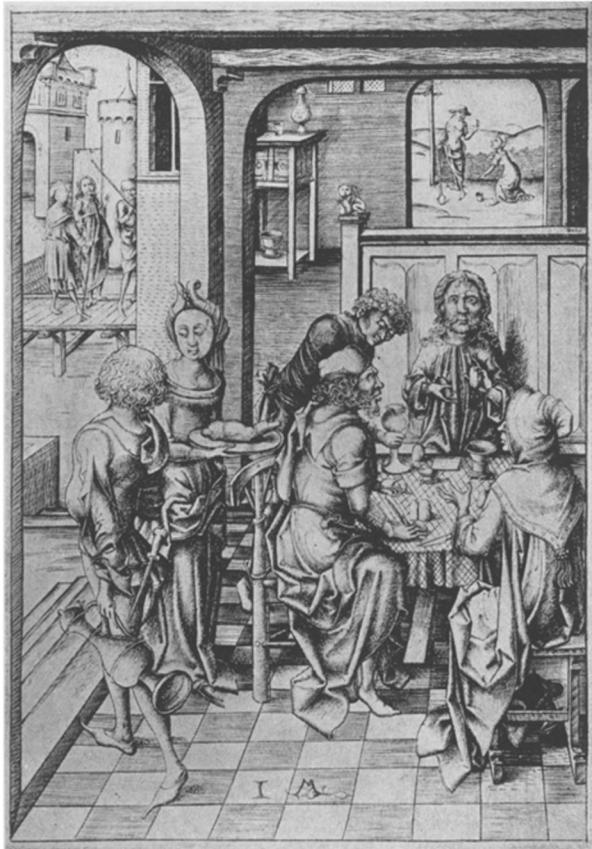
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**Israhel Van Meckenem (1447[?]-1503) and the "Large" and "Small Passion"**

ISRAHEL VAN MECKENEM was accounted one of the greatest masters by his contemporaries; two generations later he was even believed to be the inventor of engraving and the teacher of Martin Schongauer. The excessively high esteem in which his work was held gradually gave place to undeserved neglect, and he was thought to be devoid of all originality, significant only as a prolific copyist and as a reworker of other men's plates. Gradually he is regaining his rightful place, and although out of a total of five hundred and fifty-eight engravings catalogued by Geisberg ninety-six only appear to be original, there are among them masterpieces which rank with the best productions of his time, and go far to prove that Van Meckenem could well have dispensed with other men's designs. Technically (as well as in the subject matter of his earliest plates) he owes much to his father, the Master of the Berlin Passion, and to the Master of Saint Erasmus; but even more to Master E. S., "the Van Eyck of engraving" (over three hundred of whose prints he copied), who, in his turn, derives from the Master of the Playing Cards, the earliest engraver whose work has come down to us.

Strangely enough, though Israhel copied fifty-six of Martin Schongauer's engravings, twelve by the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, and, toward the end of his life, four by Dürer, his style remains individual and distinctive; many layers of fine lines,



*The Supper at Emmaus*

*I. Van Meckenem*

laid at an acute angle, shade and model the faces and figures; scratched rather than engraved — true "dry-point" work.

The Museum is signally fortunate in having acquired, recently, seven of the "Large Passion" — Israhel's *magnum opus*, engraved about 1480 — and fourteen of the "Small Passion" (1475?) : all in first states, of the finest quality, formerly in the Henry Huth Collection. Of the "Small Passion" the Museum already owned five; also first states from the Huth Collection, — the gift in 1917 of Mr. Paul J. Sachs. It now owns nineteen of this rare series. Omitting the set in Berlin and those in the Museum collection, sixteen impressions in the first states of these nineteen subjects are recorded by Geisberg as existing in public and private collections, and it is in the first states only that Van Meckenem's work can be seen at its best, and adequately judged. It then has a delicacy, a bloom, which disappears after a few impressions have been printed.\*



*The Nativity*

*I. Van Meckenem*

\* The late printings, in most collections, give no idea of the expressiveness of his technique, of his wealth of gradation from high, faintly dimmed lights to deepest shadows. The earliest impressions, which rank among the very greatest rarities, are of astounding coloristic effect. But the manner by which he attains this, — by means of many faint lines running criss-cross in all directions and losing their lustre after a very few impressions, — shows that the actual problem of technique did not occur to him. Instead of modifying his manner of work he resorted to reworking his plates — six, seven, or more, states of the reworked plates are not uncommon with him. — Max Geisberg, the *Master of the Berlin Passion and Israhel Van Meckenem (Studien zur deutschen Kunsgeschichte, 42. Heft. Strassburg, 1903)*.

The "Large Passion," judging by the number of impressions, mostly in late states, which have been preserved, must have enjoyed great popularity and an extensive sale. The size of the plates permitted an elaborate treatment of the themes and the introduction in the background of a number of subsidiary scenes of the Passion. The series was in great demand for reproduction of all kinds. As Geisberg points out, "Pilate Washing His Hands," enlarged eight times, has been used by the painter Dünwegge of Dortmund for a panel picture; two mercenaries in the same print are found copied in a luxurious manuscript, unfortunately undated; and the whole series (twelve), with only the "Entombment" after Schongauer's engraving, appears on a large tapestry, dating from the year 1480, in the Bamberg Museum. F. C.

A SPECIAL EXHIBITION OF WAR PICTURES BY SOLDIERS OF FRANCE, selected by M. Bénédite at the request of the French Government, was held in the Renaissance Court from December 13 to January 1. On Pershing Day, December 21, an orchestra, under the direction of M. Longy, played from three to five o'clock in the stairway balcony opening upon the Court.

A SPECIAL EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS FROM THE MUSÉE DU LUXEMBOURG was held in the Court from January 7 to January 26. These pictures were lent by the French Government to the San Francisco Exposition and have been kept in this country on account of the danger of shipment by sea. They were shown in Brooklyn before coming to Boston.

### Acquisitions November 7, 1918, to January 2, 1919



*The Repose in Egypt*

C. L. O. Merson

Bombing Nancy, by Lieutenant Henri Farré (see page 4) . . . . .

**Western Art.** Bass viol (to be added to the Leslie Lindsey Mason Collection of Musical Instruments) . . . . .

Silver ladle, three silver tablespoons and nine silver teaspoons . . . . .

Silver baptismal pap boat, silver porringer and three pewter tankards . . . . .

**Chinese and Japanese Art.** Lamaist *mandala* painting, Tibetan . . . . .

Three rubbings of Chinese inscriptions . . . . .



*St. Aignan, Chartres*  
D. T. Cameron

**Indian Art.** South Indian brass lamp . . . . .

Gift of Denman W. Ross.

**Prints.** St. Aignan, Chartres, by D. T. Cameron (signed artist's proof) . . . . .

Anonymous gift.

Christ Among the Doctors, by Jacob de Bye (Bie). Les deux grandes Vues de Paris: Vue du Louvre; Vue du Pont Neuf, de la Tour et de l'ancienne Porte de Nesle, by Jacques Callot. Ecce Homo, by Melchior Küsel. Jacques Callot, by Michel Lasne. Raphael Menicuccius, by Ottavio Leoni. Monk in Prayer, by Friedrich Overbeck. Apollo and the Cumæan Sibyl; St. William the Hermit; by Salvator Rosa . . . . .

Gift of W. A. Sargent.

God Blesses the Sabbath; God Receives Abel's Offering; God Shows Noah the Rainbow; by Pietro Bartoli . . . . .

Gift of Goodspeed's Bookshop.

Two "Ex Libris," by A. de Riquer (etchings, one in sepia) . . . . .

Gift of A. de Riquer.